

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 10-20 without prejudice or disclaimer.

1 (amended). A method for [remotely metering usage of a utility at a consumer site and] providing utility consumption [metering and billing] data to a utility consumer, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving metering data from a utility meter located at a remote facility operated by said utility customer, wherein said metering data is electronically transmitted from said utility meter to a data processing system;

calculating billing data using said metering data at said data processing system;

storing said metering data and said billing data electronically at said data processing system; and

reporting said metering data and said billing data electronically from said data processing system to said utility customer.

Please add the following new claims:

21. A method for reducing utility costs at a remote facility associated with an utility consumer, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving consumption information at a data processing system from a meter located at said remote facility;

receiving price factors at said data processing system;

calculating utility cost at said data processing system as a function of said consumption information and of said price factors; and

providing said utility cost from said data processing system to said utility consumer such that said utility consumer is allowed to thereby manage said utility cost for said remote facility.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said pricing options comprise a plurality of pricing factors, each of said plurality of pricing factors affecting a portion of said utility cost.
23. The method of claim 22 wherein said plurality of pricing factors comprise generation costs.
24. The method of claim 21 wherein said method is executed in real-time.
25. The method of claim 22 further comprising the step of providing billing information to said utility consumer from said data processing system.
26. The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of receiving payment information from said utility customer at said data processing system.
27. A data processing system for managing energy consumption at a facility affiliated with an energy consumer, the system being coupled to a communications medium, wherein said data processing system is configured to receive metering information via said digital network from a meter located at said facility, to determine utility cost as a function of said metering information, and to transmit said utility cost to said energy consumer via said communications medium such that said utility consumer thereby manages said utility cost for said facility.

28. The system of claim 27 wherein said utility cost is further computed as a function of price factors received via said communications medium.
29. The system of claim 28 wherein said price factors comprise a first option from a first energy source and a second option from a second energy source.
30. The system of claim 29 wherein said energy consumer evaluates said utility cost to thereby manage energy consumption at said facility.
31. The system of claim 27 wherein said metering data and said pricing options are provided in real-time.
32. The system of claim 27 wherein said data processing system is further configured to provide a billing statement to said utility customer.
33. The system of claim 32 wherein said data processing system is further configured to receive payment information from said utility customer.
34. A system for providing energy consumption data for a facility affiliated with an energy consumer, the system comprising:
 - a receiving means configured to receive metering data from a meter located at said facility via a digital network;
 - a processing means in communication with said receiving means, wherein said processing means is configured to determine pricing options as a function of said metering information and of pricing factors affiliated with an energy source;

a transmitting means configured to transmit said pricing options to said energy consumer via said digital network such that said energy consumer is allowed to evaluate said pricing options to thereby manage energy consumption at said facility.

35. A system for providing energy consumption data for a facility affiliated with an energy consumer, the system comprising:
 - an interface to a digital network, said interface being configured to receive metering data from a meter located at said facility; and
 - a processor in communication with said interface, wherein said processor is operable to determine pricing options as a function of said metering information and of pricing factors affiliated with a plurality of energy sources, and to transmit said pricing options to said energy consumer via said interface such that said energy consumer is allowed to thereby manage energy consumption at said facility based upon said pricing options.
36. A system configured to implement the method of claim 1.
37. A system configured to implement the method of claim 21.
38. A system configured to implement the method of claim 24.
39. A system configured to implement the method of claim 26.